1997 Annual Environmental Report

In the spring of 1997, Solvay Minerals was awarded the 1996 Solvay America Environmental Award for environmental accomplishments. The noted projects resulted in a reduction of emissions from the facility as well as cost savings.

The focus for 1997 was to secure permits required for the upcoming expansion project. A number of meetings were held with the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (WDEQ) during development of the permit applications.

Air Quality:
Work continued on the air quality permit application for the expansion project during 1997. Upon discovering that we could not show compliance with particulate ambient air quality standards with the current and proposed emissions rates, stack testing was conducted on existing sources to determine actual emission rates. These lower emission rates were then used in the air dispersion model to show compliance with the standards, and proposed to WDEQ in the permit application that was submitted in June. Unfortunately, a problem with the dispersion modeling was discovered by WDEQ in September, requiring further reductions to existing emission rates. By this time, final design of the expansion project was available, with changes to the originally proposed emissions sources. These revisions were incorporated into the application and submitted in October. WDEQ completed their review of the application in December, and the permit was released for the 30-day public comment period on December 30, 1997. (The permit was issued on February 6, 1998, with no comments made except by Solvay Minerals concerning one of the permit conditions.)

The Metabisulfite and Combined Bagging facilities were constructed during 1997. Required emissions testing was conducted, showing compliance with the permit limits.

Permit waivers were received for minor modifications of the Alkaten system and the sulfur burner. These projects are complete, and have resulted in the anticipated production increases. Required testing of the Alkaten system was conducted in 1997, the sulfur burner will be tested in 1998.